

Each year, citizen volunteers and MDC staff record the number of wild turkey hens and poults that they observe during June, July, and August. These observations are used to determine the success of the hatch, which is the driving force in determining wild turkey abundance. Based on the total number of hens (including hens that do not have poults) and poults observed, a poult/hen ratio is calculated, which is simply the average number of poults per hen. These data serve as an index of turkey production and can be examined across years to determine long-term trends in the success of the hatch.

A good turkey hatch throughout much of Missouri is certainly great news for fall turkey hunting enthusiasts. Fall hunting provides a tremendous opportunity to pursue wild turkeys in the setting of Missouri's beautiful fall woods. Relatively few people fall turkey hunt in the Show-Me State, which means that fall turkey hunters may just have the woods to themselves. In 2010, just 13,500 hunters purchased fall firearms turkey permits, compared to the 101,000 permits purchased this past spring. Last year's statewide fall firearms turkey harvest numbered 5,928.

